



COMMON CAUSE MINNESOTA

546 Rice Street  
Saint Paul, MN 55103  
612.605.7978

[www.commoncause.org/mn](http://www.commoncause.org/mn)

March 18, 2024

Common Cause MN is a nonpartisan grassroots organization working to create open, honest, and accountable government, more information about our work at [www.commoncause.org](http://www.commoncause.org). Minnesota is home to over 18,000 statewide Common Cause MN multipartisan members and despite belonging to various MN party affiliations, or not being affiliated, the one thing they've come together to do is support our work ensuring our Republic's democracy is safeguarded, and everyone's vote counts.

**We are grateful to Rep. Agbaje for introducing HF4043 ending the practice of prison gerrymandering in Minnesota.**

Most incarcerated Minnesotans have no ties to the community in which they are incarcerated, and many have no intentions of making it their home upon release. For the census, incarcerated individuals are counted where they are and not their home community. They do not have the right to vote so a district that houses one of our prisons currently has the same number of people as neighboring districts without prisons, while only a percentage of the prison district's population can cast a vote. In effect, Minnesotans voting in a district with a prison, in effect, carries more weight than one cast by someone who lives in a district without a prison, or a district that loses residents due to high rates of incarceration. It's time to end the practice of prison gerrymandering in MN.

We support HF4043 because it centers impacted Minnesotans in the proposed approach to ending the practice of prison gerrymandering. It recognizes that most formerly incarcerated Minnesotans return to their last known communities as they seek successful reintegration with family and community. It is this network of support at the community level that best aligns them for success. It stands to reason that most formerly incarcerated individuals do not make the community they were incarcerated in their new home. They rarely have family or a previous connection/ties to that area.

We ask members of the committee to support HF4043 and continue to partner with community in co-creating an inclusive democracy that best aligns direct and robust civic engagement with participation of all Minnesotans regardless of zip code, partisan affiliation, race/ethnicity or status as formerly incarcerated.

Thank you for your dedication to all Minnesotans as you work in committee.

*Anastacia Belladonna-Carrera*  
Anastacia Belladonna-Carrera,  
Executive Director

democracy is **OUR** common cause